

Liudmila Kazantseva
Astrakhan conservatoire, Russia
 kazantseva-lp@yandex.ru

Tonality: semantic aspect

ABSTRACT

Background

Tonality is one of the key categories in the theory of music. A lot of things in it are thoroughly studied. First of all, of interest for scientists was definition of an initial concept with respect to music of different eras, essence of a tonality, typology of tonalities, tonal dramaturgy, and polytonality. In the available scientific works the tonality appears as corner (at least in classical – in the broadest sense – music) composite means.

Meanwhile musicians and thinkers about music are not escaped also by other party of a tonality – its semantics. Thus, still the theory of affects established expressiveness of the most usable tonalities in composer practice, having generalized thereby practical experience. Tonalities were referred to certain affects – Johann Matteson, Johann Quantz, and Mark Antawn Charpentier wrote about this. Subsequently the circle of semantically important tonalities extended (e.g., in music of romantics), its synesthesia was caught in expressiveness of a tonality (in Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov and Alexander Scriabin's color-light concepts). Quite numerous observations over semantics of a tonality have so far been saved up within separate composer styles: of Johann Sebastian Bach (Orlova 2005), Wolfgang Mozart (Chigareva 2000; Einstein 1977), Frederic Chopin (Asafyev 1970), Mikhail Glinka (Kazantseva 2008), Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov (Bozina 2013), Pyotr Tchaikovsky (Kholopov 1973), Sergey Rachmaninov (Kazantseva 2005), Dmitry Shostakovich (Fanning 2000) and some other musicians. The modern science convincingly showed semantic aspect of a polytonality (Paisov 1977).

Generalizing the picture of study of the tonality semantics which developed today, it should be noted that the semantic principle of a tonality is comprehended by musicology at the empirical level of knowledge so far. We cannot speak now about any theory in this area of knowledge. Meanwhile study of a tonality without thorough research of its semantic aspect cannot be considered as satisfactory. Therefore one of the problems of modern musicology is a further research of semantic potential of a tonality.

This task assumes statement of a number of scientific questions. I will dwell upon only some of them, having used the known triad 'the composer – the performer – the listener' of the Russian musicologist and composer Boris Asafyev

If we consider a tonality as means of expressiveness, with which **the composer** operates, it is necessary to study then the semantics of a tonality ontologically and to find out how semantics is generated, what is able to express a tonality, and what is the semantic range of a tonality. The analysis of musical material shows that semantics of a tonality is interconnected with action of other components of music. Also it is worthy of noting that the tonality is displayed with different degree of

exact pitch of the sounding tonality. Hence, the question is inevitable: whether or not this means that they are indifferent to semantics of tonalities and that it is hidden from them?

The modern science considers that the tonality comprises the multilayered field of meanings which are exploded by listeners with the different width of volume and degree of depth. It means that music is counted not on sophisticated perfect ear at all, and lack of that is at all not hindrance to full perception. In the communicative act both sufficient identity of each listener's perception of a tonality, and their affinity, proximity are obvious. One of confirmations to that is balancing between similarity and distinction – which is possible to find in the comparative data (including experimental) published in a number of editions about perception of color-tonal relations.

Thus, the fluent review of the problems connected with semantics of a tonality shows that the complex of problems is extensive and still waits for the studying. 'White spots' in this field of musicology are really enormous, and research prospects are great.

Aims and repertoire studied

In the selected subject 'Tonality: semantic aspect' we examine formation of meaning in a tonality: the subjectivity and objectivity of semantics and factors influencing it.

Methods

The comprehensive approach is used including synthesis of data on psychology of musical perception, semiotics, intertextuality, the concept of archetypes of K. Jung and the complete analysis of L. Mazel.

Implications

On the basis of the conducted analysis it is becoming apparent that a metaphoricity of semantics of a tonality is ontological, natural, and by no means strictly subjective as it seems quite often. Objective bases of semantics are disclosed. It is corrected by a set of factors: features of a harmony, harmonic development and other components of musical texture. It has become obvious that the tonality is also influenced by composer style and by genre of the work. As such – subjective-objective – a phenomenon the tonality is used by the composer and perceived by the listener. Such comprehension of semantics of the tonality gives us an opportunity of its further theoretical learning.

Keywords

tonality, musical signification, musical perception, common practice tonality

definiteness: it can be concisely represented by characteristic tonality-harmonious means or – by almost inaudible, obliquely outlined hint. It is essentially important to understand how semantics of a tonality is manifested throughout the musical opus

Semantics significantly depends on intonation filling of a tonality, its intonation solution. And here the view of it from the position of the intonation dictionary of the composer can become fruitful. By experience (again, empirically!), we know that *C-dur*, say, of Bach, is absolutely different, than that of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, or Prokofiev's music. Also it is well-known that color-light sensations of tonalities at owners of the synesthetic abilities Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov and Alexander Scriabin did not coincide (the same *C-dur* seemed to Rimsky-Korsakov white, and to Scriabin – red). However, what are the reasons of formation of this or that semantics in composer's style, how it is subject to evolution, how it fits into a context of music of contemporaries, and in what degree it keeps gains of predecessors and generates followers – these questions wait for the consideration.

If we consider a tonality as means with which **the performer** operates then there are questions, and first of all – how the performer understands the author's intentions concerning a tonality. Due to the main – interpreting – performer's task it is interesting to know how adequately the interpreter transfers the semantics of the tonality felt by the author, how sensitive the interpreter is to tonal dramaturgy, i.e. to 'destiny' of a tonality in the piece of music.

A transposition, i.e. transformation of a tonality into originally performing means of expressiveness as a problem of the attachment of a performing initiative to a tonality which is constantly created by performing practice also waits for the competent – scientific – approach. Usually transposing is caused by purely technical task – adaptation of the composer's opus to performing potentialities. At the same time change of a tonality can cause no damage and even remain unnoticed. Thus, many romances and songs of the Russian and foreign composers are almost without serious consequences transferred to the tonality convenient for the singer's voice. However, sometimes transposing is also caused by semantic changes.

It is necessary to consider that sometimes in music the tonality is loaded with the special, sometimes symbolical sense opposing to its transposing. The symbolical semantics of some tonalities which developed during a baroque era, later operating in music of certain composers (Mozart *d-moll* – a tonality of 'grief and death') and the whole eras (*Des-dur*, idealized by romantics, 'fatal' *h-moll*, gloomy *b-moll*, mourning *c-moll*) does not dispose to the similar procedure. It would be serious distortion of meaning to change the tonalities having color equivalents (at Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov, Alexander Scriabin, Olivier Messiaen), as well as having received autobiographical interpretation (*B-dur* at Johann Sebastian Bach, *d-moll* at Sergey Rachmaninov, *cis-moll* at Georgy Sviridov, *D-dur* at Edison Denisov). It is clear that intervention of the performer in the tonal sphere of the work has restrictions, however, what are they and how the performing initiative is reflected in an art ensemble – is still necessary to find out.

At last, not simple are problems of semantics of a tonality as the means of expressiveness perceived by **the**

REFERENCES

- Asafyev, Boris, 1970. 'Chopin's mazourkas', *Chopin, how do we hear him*: Collected works. M.: Music: 85–109.
- Bozina, Olga, 2013. *Semantics of a tonality in opera creativity of N.A. Rimsky-Korsakov*. Krasnoyarsk: KGAMiT.
- Chigareva, Evgeniya, 2000. *Mozart's operas in the context of culture of his time*. M.: URSS.
- Fanning, David, 2000. 'The modern master of a major' *Shostakovich. Between a Moment and Eternity*: Reports. Materials. Articles / RIII. SPb.: St. Petersburg State Conservatory: 661–78.
- Einstein, Alfred, 1977. *Mozart: Figure. Creativity*. M.: Music.
- Kazantseva, Liudmila, 2008. 'Observations over semantics of a tonality in M.I. Glinka's music' *Novospassky collection. M.I. Glinka's era: Music. Poetry. Theater*: Materials of Russian Sci. Conf. 5 Smolensk: Smolensk City Printing House: 142–7.
- Kazantseva, Liudmila, 2005. 'Semantics of a tonality in Rachmaninov's music' *Sergey Rachmaninov. History and present*: Collected works R/D: RGK Publishing House: 347–65.
- Kholopov, Yuri, 1973. 'Expressiveness of tonal structures at P.I. Tchaikovsky' *Problems of Musical Science 2*. M.: Sov. Composer: 89–102.
- Orlova, Svetlana, 2005. 'Semantics of tonalities in J.S. Bach's creativity' *Art Education of Russia: Current State, Problems, Directions of Development*: Materials of Russian Sci. Conf. Volgograd: Volgograd Sci. Publishing House: 212–6.
- Paisov, Yuri, 1977. *A polytonality in works of the Soviet and foreign composers of the 20th century*. M.: Sov. Composer.

listener. It is of no secret that listeners in the majority have no perfect ear and are not capable to establish the